



JOSEPH R. BIDEN, III  
ATTORNEY GENERAL

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
820 NORTH FRENCH STREET  
WILMINGTON, DELAWARE 19801

CONTACT JASON MILLER  
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER  
PHONE (302) 577-8949  
CELL (302) 893-8939  
Jason.Miller@state.de.us

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### **Attorney General's office supports Operation False Charity law enforcement sweep**

**Wilmington, DE** – In an effort to bring public attention to fraudulent charitable solicitors who claim to help police, firefighters, and veterans and to report charity fraud enforcement action already underway, the Delaware Attorney General's office joined the Federal Trade Commission and law enforcement officials in other states in announcing *Operation False Charity*. As part of today's announcement, federal authorities, 48 states, and the District of Columbia reported 76 enforcement actions against fundraising companies, nonprofits, and individuals nationwide and highlighted education materials to help recognize and avoid charitable solicitation fraud.

"We are determined to take action against charities fraud in Delaware to ensure that peoples' donations find their way to intended causes and to protect legitimate charities across our state," said Timothy Mullaney, Director of the Attorney General's Fraud and Consumer Protection Division.

Delaware also noted its own action to combat charities fraud. Michael Metzler (age 36 of Philadelphia, PA) was indicted on December 22, 2008 on 6 felony counts of theft by false pretenses and false promise. Delaware's indictment alleges that Metzler, who was associated with the organization "Disabled Firefighters Association", used his affiliation with that organization to steal \$20,000 from Delaware residents. He has not been arrested on these charges and a warrant for his arrest remains active. Anyone with information about Metzler's whereabouts is encouraged to contact Investigator Bill Prettyman at the Delaware Attorney General's office at (302) 577-8600.

Today the FTC issued a new consumer alert – Supporting the Troops: When Charities Solicit Donations on Behalf of Vets and Military Families – providing information about charities that solicit donations on behalf of veterans and military families. The alert offers tips to help consumers ensure that their donations go to a legitimate charity. It cautions that while many legitimate charities solicit donations to support military veterans, not all charities are legitimate. Some are operators whose only purpose is to make money for themselves. Others are paid fundraisers whose fees can use up significant portions of a donation.

Details from the Federal Trade Commission about *Operation False Charity* can be found at [www.ftc.gov/charityfraud](http://www.ftc.gov/charityfraud) and at [www.ftc.gov/donaciones](http://www.ftc.gov/donaciones) for information in Spanish.

More information about charities fraud in Delaware can be found on the Attorney General's website at [www.attorneygeneral.delaware.gov/consumers](http://www.attorneygeneral.delaware.gov/consumers).

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